

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 19290 181601Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-05 CA-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /081 W
-----037806 190515Z /11

R 181430Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1865
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 19290

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, CVIS, EG, US
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH BISHOP SAMUEL

1. BISHOP SAMUEL, OFFICIALLY LISTED AS BISHOP IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC, ECUMENICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE COPTIC PATRI-ARCHATE (HE FUNCTIONS IN MANY WAYS AS POPE SHENUDA'S DE FACTO FOREIGN MINISTER) VISITED EMBASSY NOVEMBER 17. WE CAN NOT RECALL SIMILAR HIGH LEVEL COPTIC CALL IN RECENT YEARS. MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO DISCUSS FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR VISA ISSUANCE TO COPTIC PRIESTS PLANNING SHORT TERM MINISTERIAL TOURS IN U.S. AND POSSIBLE AID ASSISTANCE FOR ST. MARK'S HOSPITAL, INAUGURATED BY PRESIDENT SADAT OCTOBER 11 AS PART PRESIDENT'S EFFORT REDUCE INTERCOMMUNAL TENSIONS. EMBASSY BELIEVES WE CAN BE HELPFUL ON BOTH ISSUES AND WILL DISCUSS, WITH CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS), POSSIBILITY OF CHANNELING THROUGH CRS MODEST ASSISTANCE FOR NEW HOSPITAL (WHICH WILL BE OPEN TO ALL EGYPTIANS, REGARDLESS OF RELIGIOUS FAITH).

2. ON OTHER ISSUES, SAMUEL MADE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST:
(A) JERUSALEM. BISHOP SAMUEL WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ON SADAT'S PROPOSED VISIT TO ISRAEL. SAID PROPOSAL CAME AS "SHOCK" TO VIRTUALLY ALL EGYPTIANS BUT, ON REFLECTION, MOST REALIZED DRAMATIC STEP SUCH AS THIS WAS REQUIRED TO REACH PEACE SETTLEMENT. COPTS "ARE PRAYING" FOR SUCCESS SADAT'S INITIATIVE. SAMUEL, MEMBER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 19290 181601Z

CENTER PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WAS IN PEOPLES ASSEMBLY WHEN SADAT MADE SPEECH. SAID HE, ALONG WITH OTHERS IN HALL, HAD BEEN NONPLUSSED "WHEN PRESIDENT DELIVERED BOMB." HE NOW THOUGHT DOMESTICALLY ONLY LEFTISTS AND SOME PALESTINIANS OPPOSED VISIT, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED MANY PEOPLE ARE APPREHENSIVE TRIP COULD FAIL PRODUCE ANYTHING. IT IMPORTANT SADAT NOT RETURN FROM JERUSALEM EMPTY-HANDED.

(B) SUPPORT. SAMUEL SAID COPTIC CHURCH SUPPORTS SADAT'S INITIATIVE AND SAID GOVERNMENT KNOWS OF THIS SUPPORT. NEVERTHELESS, HE DID NOT THINK COPTS WOULD EMULATE OTHER EGYPTIAN GROUPS AND ISSUE PUBLIC DECLARATION OF APPROVAL. SAMUEL IMPLIED COPTS DO NOT WISH TO APPEAR OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC OVER POSSIBLE AMELIORATION OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS LEST THEY BE CONSIDERED LESS NATIONALISTIC THAN MUSLIM COMPATRIOTS.

(C) EXTERNAL OPPOSITION. SAMUEL ASCRIBED OPPOSITION TO SADAT'S PROPOSAL OUTSIDE EGYPT LARGELY TO THOSE WHO HAVE VESTED INTEREST IN CONTINUING CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS. CLAIMED THERE NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS WHO HAVE PROFITED ENORMOUSLY FROM CONTINUING ARAB-ISRAELI HOSTILITIES, RECEIVING MONEY FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES. SAID INDIVIDUALS MUST REALIZE ARAB STATES NOT PREPARED TO FINANCE THEM FOREVER AND SAID SOLUTION, WHEN THIS REACHED, MUST BE ONE WHICH ADDRESSES LARGER ARAB INTERESTS.

3. SHEIKH AL-AZHAR. IN PASSING, BISHOP SAMUEL NOTED COPTIC APPROVAL FOR SHEIKH AL-AZHAR'S CURRENT VISIT TO U.S. SAID SHEIKH HAD ASKED POPE SHENUDA FOR SUGGESTIONS ON WHOM TO SEE AND HOW BEST TO PRESENT EGYPTIAN CASE TO AMERICAN AUDIENCE. SHENUDA, REPORTEDLY, GAVE SHEIKH EXTENSIVE BRIEFING, PARTICULARLY ON SUBJECTS TO AVOID. SAMUEL, ONLY HALF IN JEST, OBSERVED THAT HE HOPES SHEIKH AL-AZHAR RETURNS FROM U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAIRO 19290 181601Z

WITH MORE COSMOPOLITAN VIEWS THAT THOSE HE CARRIED BACK FROM SAUDI ARABIA. SAID SHEIKH, WHILE IN SAUDI ARABIA, HAD GIVEN EXTREMELY OFFENSIVE INTERVIEW CONCERNING COPTS WHICH COMMUNITY HAD PROTESTED OFFICIALLY TO MUBARAK. "HE WOULD NEVER BE PERMITTED TO SAY THE SAME THINGS HERE."NEVERTHELESS, SAMUEL SEEMED PLEASED SHEIKH TOURING UNITED STATES AND SAID PLANS ARE UNDERWAY FOR COPTIC COMMUNITY IN AMERICA TO GIVE HIM RECEPTION. (POPE WAS RECEIVED AT WASHINGTON'S ISLAMIC CENTER.) NOTING SHEIKH'S PLANS TO CALL ON PRESIDENTTT CARTER, SAMUEL HOPED SOME OF PRESIDENT'S WELL KNOWN TOLERANCE WILL RUB OFF ON EGYPT'S LEADING MUSLIM. EILTS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, COPTICS, VISAS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO19290
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770429-0353
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771144/aaaabkun.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6d07c316-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 537860
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH BISHOP SAMUEL
TAGS: EAID, CVIS, SHUM, OTRA, EG, US, (SAMUEL, BISHOP)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6d07c316-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009